

# BRANCHING OUT

SHADOW LAKE NATURE PRESERVE'S  
2022 - 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN





# The lush forests and abundant waters of the Shadow Lake area...

are home to an array of local wildlife, including many species of birds, amphibians, and mammals. This area is also home to one of the most unique habitats found in Washington State—a 10,000-year-old peat bog. With all the beauty, wonder, and value found in this special place, it continues to be threatened by fragmentation and degradation due to human activities.

For more than 20 years, SHADOW Lake Nature Preserve has worked to protect the natural areas surrounding Shadow Lake, with emphasis placed on restoring wildlife corridors and the functioning of Shadow Lake Bog. Our work quickly expanded with the realization that the land we care for is only truly protected when everyone in our community understands the value and is empowered to care for our shared environment.

Our 2022-2025 Strategic Plan, *Branching Out*, lays the framework for growing our impact sustainably and responsibly. Fundamentally, we remain focused on protecting natural areas of most importance, such as the extraordinary peat bog, and are excited to take steps towards meeting the high standards of conservation through the Land Trust Alliance Accreditation process. In addition, we're greatly looking forward to responding to the needs of our community in order to engage everyone in this important work.

When you support SHADOW Lake Nature Preserve, you help ensure the benefits we enjoy today—clean water, clean air, and green space to experience hope, peace, and rejuvenation—exist for the animals we coexist with and for the generations that come after us. We hope you join us.

Sincerely,



**Max Prinsen**  
Founder and  
President of the Board



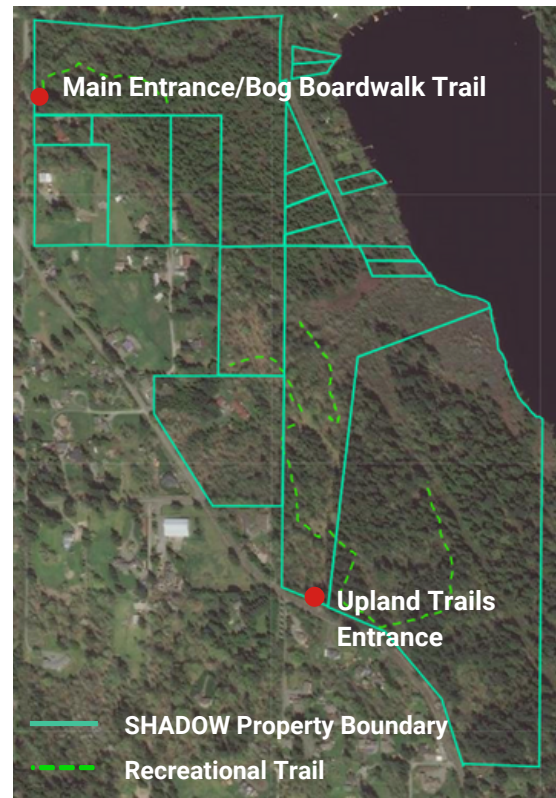
**Devon Clemens**  
Executive Director

## OUR MISSION

SHADOW Lake Nature Preserve acquires and restores critical lands to permanently protect and steward dwindling wildlife habitat while engaging and educating all.

## OUR VISION

Our vision is that the vital wildlife habitat, lands, and waters surrounding Shadow Lake are protected, connected, and cared for in perpetuity by a multi-generational community of people who experience and value the wonders of nature.



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SHADOW Lake Nature Preserve contributes to the health of South King County by preserving critical lands, restoring habitat, and providing engaging experiences for our community to understand the importance of the natural world. Today, our organization manages 109 acres of land, engages volunteers in habitat restoration projects, provides youth and adult education and community engagement opportunities, and offers access to the Nature Preserve through our trail systems.

SHADOW LAKE NATURE PRESERVE ACKNOWLEDGES THE  
SNOQUALMIE INDIAN TRIBE AND THE MUCKLESHOOT  
INDIAN TRIBE AS THE ORIGINAL STEWARDS OF THE LAND  
WE CARE FOR TODAY.



# BRANCHING OUT: PRIORITIES



**Priority 1:** Ensure sustainable organizational and financial growth



**Priority 2:** Achieve Land Trust Alliance Accreditation



**Priority 3:** Permanently protect habitat around Shadow Lake Bog



**Priority 4:** Nurture community appreciation for our shared natural environment



**Priority 5:** Ensure responsible and sustainable stewardship practices







# PRIORITY 1

## ENSURE SUSTAINABLE ORGANIZATIONAL AND FINANCIAL GROWTH

With the rate of urbanization and loss of green space in King County, more people are growing up without a strong connection to nature, making our mission more important than ever. By growing current funding sources and diversifying future sources, we can protect more land and provide more engaging experiences to our community.

### How we will accomplish this:

**Strengthen relationships with current and potential supporters.** Develop a comprehensive donor relations program, leverage board members and non-development staff in donor relations activities, and prioritize engagement with foundation, corporate partners, and individual contacts.

**Explore new opportunities to diversify funding sources.** Seek multi-year grant opportunities, expand opportunities to give through digital fundraising methods, and explore new relationships with potential partners.

**Increase awareness and enhance community perception of our mission, vision, and impact.** Broaden community outreach and communications activities, incorporate board members into outreach activities, and ensure our public areas, events, and educational programs are welcoming to all members of the community.

### Measures of Success

- Stable reserve of operating support is achieved annually
- New and diversified contributions are secured annually
- Strategic community outreach plan created and implemented





# PRIORITY 2

## ACHIEVE LAND TRUST ALLIANCE ACCREDITATION

Land Trust Alliance Accreditation shows our community that our organization meets a high standard for land conservation and assures that their investments are impactful and appropriately managed.

### How we will accomplish this:

**Work collaboratively to accomplish Land Trust Alliance Accreditation requirements.**

Assess Land Trust Alliance Accreditation requirements and develop a tracking system with identified benchmarks to measure progress. Create a work plan that delegates tasks with deadlines to board members, committees, and/or staff as appropriate.

**Ensure accountability and a timely completion of tasks.** Review Land Trust Alliance Accreditation progress on a quarterly basis at board meetings.

### Measures of Success

- Achieve Land Trust Alliance Accreditation by 2025





# PRIORITY 3

## PERMANENTLY PROTECT HABITAT AROUND SHADOW LAKE BOG

The population of Washington has grown by nearly 1 million new residents over the last decade, with King County seeing the largest population growth. With this trend projected to continue, the time is now to permanently protect green space around Shadow Lake Bog to ensure healthy, connected habitats and watersheds.

### How we will accomplish this:

**Identify and pursue land acquisition projects that preserve the most critical resources, including Shadow Lake Bog.** Develop a strategic conservation plan that adheres to a collective conservation vision for our local area, with emphasis placed on restoring connectivity of peat bog habitat and wildlife corridors.

**Engage in partnerships that support land preservation in our region.** Invite current and potential partners for discussions of a shared conservation vision, seeking cost-sharing and other funding opportunities where possible.

### Measures of Success

- Strategic conservation plan created and implemented
- Pursue a cost-sharing program or funding opportunity to acquire one new property





## PRIORITY 4

### NURTURE COMMUNITY APPRECIATION FOR OUR SHARED NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

More Americans than ever are growing up removed from the natural world and lack understanding when it comes to the importance of natural landscapes to our own health and economies. By offering access to selected areas of preserved land, educational programs, and stewardship opportunities, we can provide experiences that connect our community to the natural world and inspire them to help protect it.

### How we will accomplish this:

**Ensure appropriate capacity to effectively operate education, stewardship, and community engagement programs.** Retain excellent staff, seek new project funding opportunities, grow our network of volunteers, and build and maintain partnerships with local school districts and cities.

**Ensure our programs are inclusive, culturally relevant, educational, and enjoyable for all people in our community.** Complete thorough program assessments annually and adjust programming as needed.

**Leverage technology to expand our impact.** Utilize social media as an outreach tool and create digital content including educational videos for youth.

### Measures of Success

- Volunteer retention, total number of volunteers, and total volunteer hours are increased
- Program participants surveyed annually to determine future program needs
- Overall engagement on social media channels is increased
- At least three virtual engagement opportunities provided per year





## PRIORITY 5

### ENSURE RESPONSIBLE AND SUSTAINABLE STEWARDSHIP PRACTICES

When we place land under permanent protection, we also promise to care for that land responsibly, sustainably, and for the long term. To truly ensure we're protecting healthy habitat for our local wildlife, we must provide consistent stewardship utilizing best management practices.

#### How we will accomplish this:

**Ensure the land in our care is responsibly and sustainably managed using best management practices.** Create comprehensive, long-term management plans that include annual monitoring and assessments, integrate climate change considerations into land management and restoration planning, and ensure all activities align with Land Trust Alliance Accreditation requirements.

**Encourage environmentally sustainable public access at the Nature Preserve.** Consider impacts to the environment when planning community engagement and education activities.

**Increase organizational capacity for comprehensive and consistent restoration work.** Support qualified staff in acquiring herbicide applicator licenses for projects where manual control isn't an option, procure and maintain own tools and supplies, and leverage board knowledge and resources where possible.

#### Measures of Success

- Stewardship activities align with Land Trust Alliance best management practices
- Public use remains on selected areas (parking lots and established nature trails)
- Staff and volunteer hours dedicated to restoration are increased
- One staff member and/or board member acquires and retains herbicide applicator license



## SHADOW Lake Nature Preserve

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